## **#DONTSLEEPONAZ:**

# An In-Depth Look at Arizona's 2025 HS Baseball Statistics v. the Rest of the Country

David Webb, the head coach of the Arizona state Class 6A 2025 baseball regular season and state tournament champions Corona del Sol High School (Tempe, AZ) recently posted the following message on the social media platform X:



ø ...

There are great baseball players all over the country, but doesn't depth of talent within a state matter? AZ is loaded with kids who play against unbelievable talent every day. So impressed.#dontsleeponaz

7:12 PM · May 23, 2025 · 9,214 Views



After spending the past 2025 season scouting and observing hundreds of high school baseball players through my internship at Prep Baseball Report, I am a little biased in agreeing with Coach Webb: there is most definitely incredible amateur baseball talent in this state, and I could not have been prouder of all the players who put forth such a great effort and season...but then my baseball mindset took over and made me wonder, how good are these players as stacked up against other states throughout the country? So, I then took it upon myself to do a mini-statistical analysis to see if these players' performance holds up against some of the best talent across the country.

# I. Introduction to Pitcher DIGS

This past season, I had the privilege of being introduced to a website called "Pitcher DIGS" (Pitcher DIGS) which is run by Kyle Goings out of Northern California. In his spare time from his full-time job and as a loving husband and parent, he created and runs this website that produces an advanced statistical leaderboard of baseball players' performance for the current specific season. He had focused mainly on professional and collegiate statistics since its maiden launch back in 2023 since those were readily available through other statistical platforms, but just recently back in 2024, he started creating one for high school players. (which he was able to provide statistics and advanced metrics for over 15,000 prep players). Using the rankings and statistics provided by certain baseball media platforms, he has then been able to utilize formulas he developed to upload all the stats from those

websites to create statistical leaderboards. He has also done his best to provide a consistent, similar analysis and leaderboards for other states, prioritizing state powerhouses in the Southeast and Midwest. Upon discovery of the website and the great work Kyle does, I volunteered to help him update his spreadsheets for the state of Arizona and as many high school programs as he would like, and he graciously accepted. So, during the season leading up to the recent conclusion with the respective class state championships, I updated his Arizona High School spreadsheets with all the statistics that he needed and were available from public social media websites. It was a lot of work, but it was very rewarding once he made all the statistical generations available on his website. It is also worth noting that he has created two new baseball metrics called "DIGS" (which is a pitching metric that stands for Defensive Independent Game Score) and "BaGS" (which is an offensive metric that stands for Batter Game Score), as these were his flagship metrics when he originally launched Pitcher DIGS back in 2023. I will get more into this later in the program. All in all, we have been able to produce final statistics and metrics for over 2,700 Arizona high school players from the 2025 season. There are not too many sites out there on the World Wide Web that have such publicly available in-depth analysis of baseball amateur statistics and metric evaluations at the high school level, so I am honored to have met Kyle and been able to contribute to his endeavor.

I sincerely thank Pitcher DIGS for allowing me to contribute to this great platform and for having all these incredible stats and metrics available. None of this would be possible without it.

## II. What States to Include

In thinking through my sample pools, I wanted to see first, if possible, how high school baseball in Arizona stacked up against some of the traditional big dogs in the baseball realm, such as California, Texas, and Florida. In reviewing Pitcher DIGS, there were stats available for players in California and Florida but none this season for Texas (again, no slight towards Kyle as he has "a ton" of free time in his life...and yes, that was sarcasm). In then reviewing further what other states were available, I saw he had attempted to provide some of the top schools in the Midwest and Southeast for this season. So at this point I then reviewed MaxPreps top 100 programs rankings to see which states had the most ranked programs, and the list was as follows: Florida (with approximately 26 programs and 18 available through Pitcher DIGS), California and Texas (each with approximately 13), then Alabama (10), Georgia (8 and 0 available), Louisiana (7) and finally Mississippi (6). All but Texas had some statistics and metrics provided for selected programs from their respective state through Pitcher DIGS. Arizona had two schools in the most recent top 100, including state champs CDS, so after putting aside my emotional response to that slight, I then felt I

would use all the aforementioned states and the player statistics available through Pitcher DIGS to perform my analysis as compared to the great state of Arizona. I then concluded I would perform two separate analyses: 1) To first perform a "Top 100 player analysis" of the top 100 players from each state against selected statistics and then compare against other sub-statistics, and 2) a further "Top 500 player" comparison of players in Arizona, California and Florida, since these were the only states that had at least 500 players available through Pitcher DIGS.

# III. My Analysis and Results

The first step was to choose an all-encompassing statistic that would be a solid leaping off point. I decided to use "WAR" or Wins Above Replacement. For those of you in the baseball industry, you know what WAR means and its value as a measurement for a player's value to their respective team. For those of you who do not, WAR or Wins Above Replacement measures a player's value in all facets of the game by deciphering how many more wins he's worth than a replacement-level player at his same position (e.g., a Minor League replacement or a readily available fill-in free agent).<sup>1</sup> Pitcher DIGS has produced a HS WAR equivalent, so considering that a lot of HS players are considered "two-way" players (meaning they hit and can pitch and/or play a non-pitching position), I decided to use the WAR value as a separator factor of the top players from each respective state.

After downloading all the statistics and values for each player and then organizing them by overall WAR, I separated out the top 100 players available on Pitcher DIGS from the following states: Arizona, Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. I then produced the averages for each state based on the following statistical measures and categories as available on Pitcher DIGS: oWAR (which is the offensive WAR equivalent), pWAR (which is the pitching WAR equivalent), wOBA (which stands for "Weighted On-Base Average"), DEF (which is a defensive value placed on each available player), ERA ("Earned Run Average"), BaGS+ (which is the previously disclosed Batter Games score that includes a plus factor), DIGS+ (which is the previously disclosed (Defensive Independent Game Score that also contains a plus factor) and TWP+ (which is a "two-way player" metric produced by Pitcher DIGS that also contains a plus factor).

A couple final disclaimers I would like to make 1) some states only had a few of their top 100-ranked programs statistics available through Pitcher DIGS (Florida/18, California/8, Louisiana/4, Alabama/3, Arizona/2, and Georgia and Mississippi/0), and 2). However, I decided to move forward with the analysis as provided; and 2) I could have been selective with my pools (ie, focused on being selective on values specific to pitchers and hitters);

however, this was a general overall statistical analysis/comparison, and thus could leave room down the road to do a more critical evaluation by specific statistics and state programs.

## A. The First Group of Stats/Metrics (WAR, oWAR, pWAR, wOBA, ERA, and DEF)

I decided to separate out my analysis into two subgroups. The first group consisted of values and metrics that generally had "smaller figures" to have the ability to show in a similar graphical presentation and not be distorted by one being larger than the other(s). Those stats/metrics would be WAR, oWAR, pWAR, wOBA, ERA, and DEF. To give you some context on what each stat/metric represents, here are the definitions provided by MLB.com<sup>2</sup> and Pitcher DIGS<sup>3</sup>:

• Wins Above Replacement, including offensive and pitching WAR (WAR/oWAR/pWAR): WAR measures a player's value in all facets of the game by deciphering how many more wins he's worth than a replacement-level player at his same position (e.g., a Minor League replacement or a readily available fill-in free agent).

### WAR = Wins Above Replacement

- □ Combines points from ALL games played... it's a total.
- OWAR includes offensive & fielding production.
- □ pWAR includes only pitching production.
- □ WAR combines the two scores.
- □ Last year, 0.5 WAR was the average for all players in Superior CA (nearly 2,000 players).
- □ Roughly 100 players earned 3+ WAR | Top 30 earned 4+ | Top 15 earned 5+.

## • Defensive Value (DEF):

### Fielding (labeled DEF on the BaGS leaderboard)

- Awards points for any outs or assists recorded in the field.
- Does NOT penalize for errors (1 point if the play is made, 0 if it's not).
- Weighted On-Base Average (wOBA): wOBA is a version of on-base percentage that accounts for how a player reached base -- instead of simply considering whether a player reached base. The value for each method of reaching base is determined by how much that event is worth in relation to projected runs scored (example: a double is worth more than a single). Unlike on-base percentage and OPS (OBP + SLG), wOBA assigns value to each method of reaching base, in terms of its impact on scoring runs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> <u>Glossary | MLB.com</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> <u>Pitcher DIGS on X: https://t.co/3Bcrx1J7is" / X</u>

• **Earned Run Average (ERA):** Earned run average represents the number of earned runs a pitcher allows per nine innings -- with earned runs being any runs that scored without the aid of an error or a passed ball. ERA is the most commonly accepted statistical tool for evaluating pitchers.

Here are the statistical averages and graphical representations of these statistics/metrics for each state:

724
364
282
788
628
078
874



In reviewing the above numbers and charts, it shows that Arizona is highly competitive in the vast majority of the selected categories, being placed as follows:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> in overall average WAR to FL by only 0.341992 pts.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> in average oWAR to FL by only 0.227015 pts.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> in pWAR to FL and CA by only 0.658446 and 0.455015 pts. respectively.
- In a virtual tie for second with CA for average wOBA to FL by only 0.019648; and

• 3<sup>rd</sup> in average DEF run value to FL and CA by only 0.140548 and 0.12558 pts. Respectively.

The only statistic Arizona did not perform well in was Earned Run Average (3<sup>rd</sup> highest average), but overall Arizona is performing very well against all the states selected for the above applicable statistics and metrics.

## B. The Second Group of Statistics/Metrics (BaGS+, DIGS+ and TWP+)

The next group of statistics and metrics I wanted to use to evaluate these states were the new stats and metrics generated by Pitcher DIGS: Batter Game Score (BaGS), Defense Independent Game Score (DIGS) and Two Way Player (TWP). Each metric also contained a "plus" component, making them "BaGS+", "DIGS+" and "TWP+". Here are the explanations of each as provided by Pitcher DIGS through their website and X account<sup>4</sup>:

# • Batter Game Score (BaGS and BaGS+)⁵:

BaGS is an offensive rating system designed around the inputs of ottoneu fantasy baseball scoring (AB, 1B, 2B, 3B, HR, BB, HBP, SB, & CS). Statcast Barrels are also incorporated when available, as are GDP & SF. BaGS can be calculated on a single-game basis, but is primarily intended for comparing season or career performance. BaGS is adjusted for park, league, & year at the MLB level; age, level, park, & league for MiLB; and age, conference, & park (where applicable) for collegiate. BaGS scoring (where 50 is average) is used to estimate a player's wOBA, then converted to BaGS+ (where 100 is average).

## BaGS+ Scale

- 175 | Elite (+++)
- 150 | Excellent (++)
- 125 | Very Good (+)
- 100 | League Average
- 75 | Replacement

## BaGS = Batter Game Score (measures offensive success)

- □ BaGS awards points for things like hits (different weights for each type), BB, SB, HBP, & Sac Flies.
- BaGS penalizes (takes away points) for making outs, and doubles the penalty for strikeouts.
- BaGS is calculated as the average of all games played.
- □ BaGS+ means the scores are converted to a scale where 100 is average. Anything over 150 is excellent.

## • Defense Independent Game Score (DIGS and DIGS+)<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> <u>https://t.co/3Bcrx1J7is" / X</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> <u>Pitcher DIGS - BaGS</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> <u>Pitcher DIGS - DIGS</u>

DIGS is a game score metric measuring IP, SO, BB, HBP, HR, & H. It is designed for multiinning pitchers, is adjusted for park, league, & year for MLB; age, level, park, & league for MiLB; and age, conference, & park (when applicable) for NCAA & JuCo. While DIGS marries a results-based model (including raw H & HR) with a batted ball regression model (where batted ball types & quality of contact are used at the MLB level & league average results are used for MiLB & college). The formula is designed so a player's reported DIGS score will lean heavily to the regression model early on, then gradually slide more to the results model as his BF total rises during the season. DIGS scoring (where 50 is average) is used to estimate a player's ERA, then converted to DIGS+ (where 100 is average).

## **DIGS+ Scale**

- 160 | Elite (+++)
- 140 | Excellent (++)
- 120 | Very Good (+)
- 100 | League Average
- 80 | Below Average
- 60 | Replacement

### DIGS = Defense Independent Game Score (measures pitching success)

- Awards points for each out recorded (extra for K's).
- Penalizes for hits, HR, BB, & HBP.
- Does NOT penalize for defensive errors.
- □ Adds in a "batted ball luck factor" for each pitcher to account for defensive gaps.
- Calculated as an average of all games pitched.
- DIGS+ means scores are converted to a scale where 100 is average. Scores over 140 are excellent.

### • Two-Way Player score (TWP and TWP+):

### TWP+ = Two-Way Players

- Combines BaGS & DIGS (plus strength of schedule) to rate two-way player production..
- □ 100 is average. Scores over 150 are excellent.

One aspect of each of these new metrics is that each contains a "strength of schedule" (SOS) component, factoring in each respective player's class/division level of competition. Here is how that SOS component is factored in per Pitcher DIGS, including points for graduation year<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://x.com/DigsPitcher/status/1775968668704506036

#### Strength of Schedule (labeled SOS+ on leaderboards)

- □ Calculated using Maxpreps team ratings & strength ratings from the past 3 years.
- □ Schools receive SOS points from their own opponents & their league rating.
- □ A 100 SOS+ score means exactly average competition.
- □ All players receive an SOS adjustment (either raises or lowers their score).

### **Graduation Year**

□ Minor points awarded for underclassmen (freshmen >> soph >> juniors)

Here are the statistical averages and graphical representations of these statistics/metrics for each state:

	BaGS+	DIGS+	TWP+
AZ Ave.	158.3180	130.0243	158.2078
AL Ave.	139.6000	130.2349	147.9801
CA Ave.	162.9175	149.3665	167.3552
FL Ave.	164.0475	146.1991	166.1814
GA Ave.	134.0349	138.3323	155.6154
LA Ave.	138.1464	135.0943	143.6982
MS Ave.	130.3077	129.8293	144.5237



As you can see from the numbers and the charts, Arizona performed very well in the offense-focused BaGS+ and overall TWP+ metrics (3<sup>rd</sup> to only CA and FL) but was 6<sup>th</sup> out of seven in the pitching-focused DIGS+. So, this tells me that Arizona has a lot of great hitters and overall baseball talent but still lags in pitching talent and performance.

## C. Third Sub-Group (Top 500 Players v. California and Florida)

Even though these figures and charts by themselves would produce a sufficient analysis of the overall high school baseball talent in Arizona, I knew there were greater than 100 players statistics and metrics available on Pitcher DIGS for Arizona, California and Florida, and I wanted to see how they compared against each other with a larger sampling size. So, I decided to take it one step further and compare the top 500 players by overall WAR in Arizona, Florida and California using the previously provided metrics to evaluate.

Here are the statistical averages and graphical representations of these statistics/metrics for each state for the Top 500 players by overall WAR:

	WAR	oWAR	wOBA	pWAR	ERA	DEF
AZ Ave.	3.050912	2.404639	0.493007	0.984153	3.928889	0.506311
CA Ave	1.498604	1.377423	0.464428	1.093018	3.466476	-0.372700
FL Ave.	2.256105	1.777112	0.499288	1.324660	2.604877	-0.041660



	BaGS+	DIGS+	TWP+
AZ Ave.	142.4051	117.6153	138.7351
CA Ave	136.2639	131.5350	146.0417
FL Ave.	142.0442	134.3517	146.7416



As you can see from the results, Arizona greatly improved in virtually all of the stats and metrics, especially in the offensive categories by placing top numbers in overall average WAR, oWAR, and BaGS+, and also placing second to FL in wOBA by a miniscule 0.006281 pts. The DEF values also showed significant improvement, leapfrogging both CA and FL first (both CA and FL displayed negative DEF values when expanded to their top 500 players, which I found interesting). The pitching metrics, however, still lagged by being behind in all related categories of average pWAR, ERA and DIGS+, which is consistent with the earlier sample findings. Overall baseball athleticism still also lagged behind both CA and FL even with the expanded group, as AZ still ranked third in average TWP+ metric, but the point differential could be considered not that significant, as a 138 average TWP+ score is closer to the 150 level of excellent than being average at 100.

## IV. Conclusions

Based on this analysis and available program statistics, I would agree with Coach David Webb in that the talent level of the Arizona high school baseball players are very competitive with other states and programs across the country (especially in the hitting/offensive and defensive statistical categories), including the traditional state powerhouses of California and Florida. Again, as previously stated, this was along the lines of an introductory analysis and could be taken in a lot of different directions and deeper analysis. The point of this was to bring to light the great baseball talent here in the great state of Arizona. Even though there is room for improvement in certain areas and skill sets, Arizona should be very proud to know it has talent levels in some cases greater than or equal to any high school program across the country. I know I am.

## #dontsleeponaz